FROM DESCRIPTION TO EXPLANATION: A LOAD-SENSITIVE MODEL OF RENDERING CULTURE-BOUND TERMS IN UZBEK–ENGLISH SIMULTANEOUS INTERPRETING

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Abstract

Earlier studies of culture-bound terms (CBTs) in simultaneous interpreting (SI) have mostly catalogued translation techniques and illustrated them with isolated examples. This thesis moves from description to explanation. It proposes a load-sensitive decision model that links the status of a CBT, the momentary processing load and the audience's cultural knowledge to the choice of rendering, and outlines how the model can be tested on a bidirectional Uzbek–English corpus. An illustrative application to Uzbek terms not analysed before (mahalla, hokim, kelin salom) suggests that glossing is viable only when capacity allows, and that prepared glossaries can move costly decisions from the booth to the preparation stage. The model forms the conceptual core of a planned doctoral project.

Keywords

culture-bound terms; simultaneous interpreting; decision model; processing load; Uzbek–English; glossary preparation.

Introduction. Culture-bound terms (CBTs) are a persistent difficulty in simultaneous interpreting (SI), where meaning must be rendered within seconds and without recourse to reference tools. The author's earlier studies approached the problem descriptively. One listed the techniques available for rendering cultural terms — paraphrase, substitution, cultural adaptation and explanation — and illustrated them with

examples from a presidential speech; another surveyed Newmark's procedures for bridging cultural gaps and the state of research on SI in Russian and Uzbek translation studies; a third compared strategy classifications proposed in the interpreting literature. What these studies did not establish is why an interpreter chooses one rendering rather than another at a given moment, and how that choice can be predicted and trained. This thesis addresses that gap.

Model. The study proposes an explanatory model with three components. The first is term status: a CBT is treated as lexicalised if English already has an established form for it and as non-lexicalised if it does not, in line with Aixelá's view that a culture-specific item is defined by the problem its transfer creates in the target culture. The second is processing load. Gile's Effort Model describes SI as competition between listening and analysis, production, short-term memory and coordination for limited attention capacity, and names problem triggers such as fast delivery and dense information. The third is audience knowledge and purpose, since functionalist theory judges a rendering by whether it serves the communicative purpose for its audience rather than by formal closeness. From these components a decision logic follows: (a) a lexicalised term is rendered by its established form; (b) a non-lexicalised term is borrowed and briefly glossed when load is low and the audience's knowledge is limited; (c) under high load it is borrowed without a gloss or generalised, and the gloss is delayed until capacity returns; (d) recurrent terms are moved out of the booth by preparing agreed short glosses in advance.

Method. The model is to be tested on a corpus of university recorded Uzbek-English and English-Uzbek renderings 6 hours drawn from and covering three genres: diplomatic-political, media-cultural and educational-scientific. Each CBT is coded for status, strategy, load indicators (speech rate, information density, neighbouring problem triggers) and audience type; adequacy is rated independently by two raters, and inter-

rater agreement is reported.

Results. The conceptual stage yields three testable hypotheses. H1: as load increases, bare borrowing, generalisation and omission replace glossing. H2: lexicalised terms show the lowest variability of renderings, and non-lexicalised institutional and ritual terms the highest. H3: experienced interpreters adjust glossing to audience knowledge, whereas novices more often omit or over-explain. An illustrative application to four terms not analysed in the earlier studies shows how the logic works. Navruz and plov are lexicalised and cost almost nothing to render. Mahalla and hokim are non-lexicalised institutional terms: a short gloss ("a self-governing neighbourhood community"; "the head of the local administration") is affordable once, after which the bare borrowing suffices. Kelin salom, a wedding ritual, is opaque to outsiders and costly to explain, so it calls for a prepared formula or a delayed gloss. These renderings are candidate solutions derived from the model, not observed data.

Discussion and conclusion. Compared with the earlier descriptive studies, the model is explanatory, because it relates the choice of rendering to conditions; predictive, because it yields hypotheses that can be falsified; and applied, because it shows where glossaries and training can intervene before the moment of interpreting. It also treats the interpreter as a cultural mediator who balances fidelity to the source culture against the needs of the audience. On this basis a doctoral topic is proposed: "A linguocultural and cognitive model of rendering culture-bound units in simultaneous interpreting (on the material of Uzbek and English)". The project widens the earlier scope in four ways: from a single speech to a multi-genre corpus, into which the presidential speech analysed earlier can be integrated as one text; from a list of techniques to a tested model; from one direction to both directions of interpreting; and from professionals only to a comparison of novice and professional interpreters. Its outputs will be a validated model, a glossary of Uzbek CBTs with recommended short glosses, and guidelines for

interpreter training in Uzbekistan.

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